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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 001432

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: JORDANIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SETS UP
HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTORATE

Classified By: ACTING DCM DOUGLAS A. SILLIMAN. REASONS: 1.5 (b) and (d)
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SUMMARY

1. (C) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently announced formation of a "Human Rights Directorate" within the MFA. On March 5, MFA Human Rights Officer Bisher Khasawneh told PolCouns and PolOff the MFA wants the new directorate to "have teeth", and is committed to providing HR training for as many as six Jordanian diplomats. Khasawneh asked for Embassy assistance in facilitating this training. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On March 5, PolCouns and PolOff met with Bisher Khasawneh, newly appointed MFA officer (note: Khasawneh is also the MFA's Director of the Information and Public Relations Bureau). Khasawneh said FM Muasher wants the HR Directorate to "have teeth". It is designed to work initially with international NGOs and Embassies here in Amman. Khasawneh hopes to be able to train up to six Jordanian diplomats at private institutions in either Europe or the US, and asked if the USG would be able to assist financially. PolCouns said we would take a look at our programming funds, but advised that funding may be difficult, especially since enrollment in US private institutions is particularly expensive. Khasawneh took the point, and said he is willing to consider alternatives such as training at the Embassy, perhaps by an FSI HR expert.

COMMENT

3. (C) The MFA's initiative to set up a HR Directorate is a good step, and in line with the GOJ's recently announced HR Commission, as well as a recent request by the Ministry of Social Development to assist with HR training of their staff. We will look into avenues through which we can help facilitate training for the MFA's HR Directorate, including possible use of the international visitors program, voluntary visitors program, or MEPI funds.
GNEHM